



# Legislative Lingo



It is time to make our appeal to the Georgia policy makers about what we see as our priorities for this year concerning the budget. They are just now beginning to make their plans for the budget, so they need to get our input while they are formulating theirs.

The following persons need to be contacted concerning our budgetary items:

- Tommy Olmstead, Commissioner • CC: Lynn Ladd, Peg Peters, and Roger Smith  
Address: Department of Human Resources, #2 • Peachtree Street, Atlanta, 30303
- Governor Roy Barnes • address: State Capital, Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Foster Care Per Diems funding continues to be a concern. Even though we have received increases in the last 3 out of 4 years, we still are not at the level that we feel represents fair and equitable reimbursement for the volunteers who care for Georgia's children. Presently, we are receiving \$11.25 per day to care for foster children. We would like to see this increased to \$12.00 per day. Your advocacy for this item will help DHR and the Governor's office prioritize.

As you consider the letter that you will write concerning the legislative issues, some suggestions may be appropriate. The Association has targeted our legislative appropriations agenda to a per diem increase for foster parents. This agenda paper can be found at the GAHSC web site at: [Le990116-fcpositionpaper.html](http://Le990116-fcpositionpaper.html)

As you write your letter, keep these issues in mind:

- Tell them a little about your self and family. Tell them about the foster children that you care for.
- The next paragraph should state your issue for concern for example, the low reimbursement rate, the costs associated with caring for a foster children, and how an increase will assist you in caring for that child. The position paper should help you with formulating the language. (Do not copy verbatim but do use the key phrases marked in quotation marks ".)
- The next paragraph should state simply what you would like to happen. "I would like the State to increase the foster care per diem from \$11.25 to \$12.00 per day. Again, the position paper should help you formulate the language.
- The next paragraph should thank the policy maker for their help and assistance and give them a way in which to contact you.
- If you know someone on our VIP List, please contact Normer Adams so that a personal contact can be made.

Thanks!

**Normer Adams**, Executive Director, Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children

## Federal Legislative Update - New Investments Will Benefit Foster and Adoptive Children

The President's FY 2000 budget proposal includes a variety of new spending initiatives to help children and families. These investments are funded by new taxes, including a new tax on tobacco, and with Medicaid reimbursements from states expected to receive funds from a legal settlement with tobacco companies.

The President has proposed \$280 million in new spending over a five year period to support young people leaving foster care to make a successful transition to independence. Hillary Clinton announced the President's initiative to help 20,000 children who reach the age of 18 and leave foster care each year. This funding will include a \$35 million increase for the Title IV-E Independent Living program, a \$50 million four-year program of competitive grants for states to help support these youths with living expenses, a \$5 million increase in funding for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Transitional Living Program, and the option to states of providing Medicaid coverage for children leaving foster care up to age 21. This initiative takes a great step to address the serious problems older youths face when they leave care. CWLA has put great emphasis on this problem and will work to support these improvements and others to help young people in care up to age 21 gain access to needed services during the transfer from foster care and after emancipation.

The President's budget includes funding for Title XX at the level of \$2.38 billion. Title XX is a program which helps with life skills education, employment and transportation for people with disabilities. This funding is an increase of \$471 million over last year.

Title IV-E of the Social Security Act provides a federal share of reimbursements for foster care maintenance payments for AFDC eligible children, as well as assistance for families who adopt AFDC eligible children with "special needs."

It is expected members of the Senate will introduce legislation to address the need for additional resources and support to achieve the permanency goals of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.



*Here Are Some Very Useful Internet Links For Adults And Children Alike. If You Would Like To Submit Your Favorite Link, Please Contact The Editor At His Address On Page 2.*

*Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia* [www.gahsc.org/AFPAG](http://www.gahsc.org/AFPAG)

*Georgia Department of Human Resources*  
a lot of good information here:  
[www.doas.state.ga.us/Departments/DHR](http://www.doas.state.ga.us/Departments/DHR)

*Connect For Kids*  
lots of great info for parents and adults:  
[www.connectforkids.org](http://www.connectforkids.org)

*ADOPT*  
assistance, information, support and state-by-state availability lists:  
[www.adopting.org](http://www.adopting.org)

*Foster Parent Community Chat*  
live chat when you find someone online:  
[www.fosterparents.com/chat.html](http://www.fosterparents.com/chat.html)

*National Foster Parent Association, Inc.*  
lots of great national info here:  
[www.nfpainc.org](http://www.nfpainc.org)

*Nick Jr.*  
Lots of great activities for younger kids:  
[www.nickjr.com](http://www.nickjr.com)

## Thank You Lord

Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when the alarm rings,  
Thank You Lord that I can hear.  
There are many who are deaf.

Even though I shut my eyes in the morning light as long as I can,  
Thank You Lord, that I can see.  
There are many who are blind.

Even though I huddle in my bed and put off rising,  
Thank You Lord, that I have the strength to rise.  
There are many who are bedridden.

Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is burnt, tempers are short and my children are so loud,  
Thank You Lord for my family.  
There are many who are lonely.

Even though our breakfast table never looks like the pictures in magazines and the menu is at times unbalanced,  
Thank You Lord for the food we have.  
There are so many who are hungry.

Even though the routine of my job is often monotonous,  
Thank You Lord for the chance to work.  
There are many who have no job.

Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day to day, and wish my circumstances were not so modest,  
Thank You Lord for life.  
There are so many...